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AUTHORITY: 40 U.S.C. 121(c); 10 U.S.C. chapter 137; and 42 U.S.C. 2473(c).

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9.000 Scope of part.

This part prescribes policies, standards, and procedures pertaining to prospective contractors' responsibility; debarment, suspension, and ineligibility; qualified products; first article testing and approval; contractor team arrangements; defense production pools and research and development pools; and organizational conflicts of interest.

Subpart 9.1—Responsible Prospective Contractors

9.100 Scope of subpart.

This subpart prescribes policies, standards, and procedures for determining whether prospective contractors and subcontractors are responsible.

9.101 Definitions.

Administrative proceeding means a non-judicial process that is adjudicatory in nature in order to make a determination of fault or liability (*e.g.*, Securities and Exchange Commission Administrative Proceedings, Civilian Board of Contract Appeals Proceedings, and Armed Services Board of Contract

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Appeals Proceedings). This includes administrative proceedings at the Federal and state level but only in connections with performance of a Federal contract or grant. It does not include agency actions such as contract audits, site visits, corrective plans, or inspection of deliverables.

Surveying activity, as used in this subpart, means the cognizant contract administration office or, if there is no such office, another organization designated by the agency to conduct preaward surveys.

[48 FR 42142, Sept. 19, 1983, as amended at 66 FR 2128, Jan. 10, 2001; 75 FR 14065, Mar. 23, 2010]

9.102 Applicability.

(a) This subpart applies to all proposed contracts with any prospective contractor that is located—

(1) In the United States or its outlying areas; or

(2) Elsewhere, unless application of the subpart would be inconsistent with the laws or customs where the contractor is located.

(b) This subpart does not apply to proposed contracts with (1) foreign, State, or local governments; (2) other U.S. Government agencies or their instrumentalities; or (3) agencies for the blind or other severely handicapped (see subpart 8.7).

[48 FR 42142, Sept. 19, 1983, as amended at 68 FR 28080, May 22, 2003]

9.103 Policy.

(a) Purchases shall be made from, and contracts shall be awarded to, responsible prospective contractors only.

(b) No purchase or award shall be made unless the contracting officer makes an affirmative determination of responsibility. In the absence of information clearly indicating that the prospective contractor is responsible, the contracting officer shall make a determination of nonresponsibility. If the prospective contractor is a small business concern, the contracting officer shall comply with subpart 19.6, Certificates of Competency and Determinations of Responsibility. (If Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637) applies, see subpart 19.8.)

(c) The award of a contract to a supplier based on lowest evaluated price alone can be false economy if there is subsequent default, late deliveries, or other unsatisfactory performance resulting in additional contractual or administrative costs. While it is important that Government purchases be made at the lowest price, this does not require an award to a supplier solely because that supplier submits the lowest offer. A prospective contractor must affirmatively demonstrate its responsibility, including, when necessary, the responsibility of its proposed subcontractors.

[48 FR 42142, Sept. 19, 1983, as amended at 61 FR 67410, Dec. 20, 1996; 62 FR 44819, Aug. 22, 1997; 62 FR 48921, Sept. 17, 1997; 65 FR 80264, Dec. 20, 2000; 66 FR 17755, Apr. 3, 2001; 66 FR 66986, 66989, Dec. 27, 2001]

9.104 Standards.

9.104-1 General standards.

To be determined responsible, a prospective contractor must—

(a) Have adequate financial resources to perform the contract, or the ability to obtain them (see 9.104-3(a));

(b) Be able to comply with the required or proposed delivery or performance schedule, taking into consideration all existing commercial and governmental business commitments;

(c) Have a satisfactory performance record (see 48 CFR 9.104-3(b) and part 42, subpart 42.15). A prospective contractor shall not be determined responsible or nonresponsible solely on the basis of a lack of relevant performance history, except as provided in 9.104-2;

(d) Have a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics (for example, see Subpart 42.15).

(e) Have the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills, or the ability to obtain them (including, as appropriate, such elements as production control procedures, property control systems, quality assurance measures, and safety programs applicable to materials to be produced or services to be performed by the prospective contractor and subcontractors) (see 9.104-3(a));

(f) Have the necessary production, construction, and technical equipment